

through the combined exertions of individuals in the systematic examination of ancient models, a new style of Gothic architecture may arise, characteristic of this age, and not inferior to any preceding. As the Gothic architecture of England at the Reformation, so the architecture of Italy declined at the establishment of the Christian religion, and at last appeared to be extinct. (Vide Review of d'Agincourt's *Histoire de l'Art*, &c. p. 290 *ante*.) With the Lombard style prevailing in the north, Byzantine in the east, a distinct style at Pisa, and the infusion of Arabian, and of pointed architecture from Germany, there would be many to doubt the re-birth of a national style, and to affirm, that the Grecian stock had been exhausted in "the eternal city." But, from that degenerate taste in the decline of the empire, sprang the marvels of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the north of Europe, whilst the architects of Italy, applying the principles of the recently discovered works of Vitruvius, exhibited in the models of ancient art in Rome, to the wants of their own day, succeeded in producing an original style, to which the remaining examples appear to offer very slight suggestion. If the Italian architects could succeed in producing a style so dissimilar, but still of great beauty, conducive to their wants, and yet susceptible of improvement, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that with such abundant materials, and such resources of science as we possess, we have the power, from a style like the Roman apparently exhausted, to produce another conducive to the wants of this age. The labours of individuals can do little to alter the present condition, very little, whilst they are excited in all directions, and in none continuously. It is by combined exertions, by the systematic examination and classification of details, that we may hope to perfect our knowledge of Gothic Architecture, to gain an insight into the principles of our ancestors, and by applying them, or varying them according to modern wants, produce a style, which, like the architecture of Italy, shall be original, distinct, and characteristic of the times.

The means of escaping from present errors are difficult to suggest, but as a conviction of the evil is one step towards the remedy, we should esteem ourselves fortunate in reaching that much of the progress. E. H.

## REVOLVING IRON SHUTTERS.

BUNNETT AND CORPE & SMITH.

An action brought by the plaintiffs Messrs. Bunnett and Corpe, manufacturers of the patent revolving iron safety shutters, against the defendant, Andrew Smith, of Princes-street, Leicester-square, for an infringement of the patent granted to the plaintiff Bunnett in 1836, was tried on the 23rd and 24th ult., in the Court of Exchequer, before the Lord Chief Baron, Sir F. Pollock, Knt., and a special jury.

From the evidence, it appeared that the adoption of iron blinds or curtains to the windows of Apsley House, by his Grace the Duke of Wellington, in the troubled times of 1831-2, directed the attention of several ingenious men to the fitness of shutters of a similar material to the purposes of general security. In the year 1833, Messrs. Turner and Barron put up several revolving iron shutters at the house of Lord Brownlow, in Belgrave-square; these shutters were composed of narrow strips or laths of iron, connected by hinges of copper in such a way that a series of interstices were apparent between the laths, while the hinges were both visible and easily accessible on the outside of the building. The raising of these shutters was effected by a catgut band which wound off from a roller at the top of the window on to a small windlass placed below. Shutters of a similar description were also put up by the same parties at the banking house of Messrs. Glynn and Co., and of Edalle and Co., in Lombard-street; at the Conservative Club-house, Pall Mall; the Turk's Head Tavern, in the Strand; and some other places. In June, 1836, Mr. Bunnett obtained letters patent for his improvements in revolving iron shutters, which consisted in the adoption of strips of iron connected together by hinges of iron in such a manner as to avoid the necessity for cutting away the edges of the strips to receive the knuckles of the hinges. Mr. Bunnett likewise adopted the endless screw and

worm-wheel, as peculiarly adapted for raising or lowering all such shutters. In Mr. Bunnett's improved shutter each lath or strip of iron overlaps and lies in close contact with the one below it, so as to form a firm sheet of iron, which not only concealed the joints or hinges, but also effectually secured them from external violence.

The utility of Mr. Bunnett's invention was duly appreciated by the public, and his revolving shutters came at once into most extensive use, being adopted by nearly all the bankers and insurance companies, as well as by numerous tradesmen and others in the metropolis, and in the principal towns throughout the kingdom. The demand had gone on progressively increasing, and for a period of eight years the patentees were allowed the undisputed monopoly of their patent right. In 1844, however, the defendant Smith made and put up eight shutters in a building in George-street, Mansion-house, belonging to Messrs. Smith, Payne, and Co., which were considered to be a direct infringement of the plaintiff's patent; and an application was made for an injunction to restrain the defendant from proceeding with his infringement. The Vice-Chancellor, Sir L. Shadwell, deferred granting the injunction, making the usual order, and directing the plaintiff to establish the validity of his patent in an action at law.

The evidence of Mr. Carpinell, Mr. Farey, Mr. Laxton, Mr. Cottam, and Mr. Baddeley went to shew the novelty and usefulness of the plaintiff's invention as well as the sufficiency of the specification.

The defendant's record contained the usual pleas of want of novelty, utility, &c. An attempt was made to prove the former by reference to two patents granted to Mr. Michel and Mr. Whiting in the years 1818 and 1819 (both for wood shutters); and that the defendant's shutter was an improvement upon, and not an infringement of, the plaintiff's patent. The trial lasted nearly two whole days, and after a deliberation of upwards of two hours, the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff upon all the issues, with damages, and his lordship certified that the right to a patent came in question, and that it was a proper cause for a special jury.

## THE LATE CONFLAGRATIONS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA.

BY J. L.—V.

"Prevention is the best remedy."

ALTHOUGH every thing gets now-a-days drowned and engulfed by the overflowing of an exuberant (and in many cases useless and unmeaning) public press—yet, the late awful calamities have been able making some impression on the public mind; a reason why we resume this subject, to bring it to a final close. Having in our preceding paper urged "the regeneration of architecture," as the surest and soundest remedy for the preventing of calamitous fires—a moral agency withal, at least in its leading principle; we have to state now, that notwithstanding the fragile and futile (main) buildings, in which people condescend, or are compelled to live—we are most anxious to fill such frail receptacles with every sort of equally futile and combustible tawdriness; such as huge bed and window curtains, table covers, carpets and rugs, and drapery and trappings of every kind. But we do not wage war against comfort and ornament, but against its abuse and illegitimacy. In this respect also our forefathers were the better men—their furniture was made for centuries, like their buildings for ages. But as such most futile lumber is often acquired by very heavy sacrifice (and, even of principle), we say, let us not go too far that way; let us somewhat retrograde to the noble and stern and pure simplicity of our forefathers; and, we are sure every loving parent will approve of our suggestion, "let your children sleep in a safe house, even if their bed be without curtains."

Another cause of fires (it comes always to principle) is the careless—atheistic—way, in which fire is handled and managed by, not alone servants, but even by masters, who ought to know better. The criterion of atheistic belief is to consider ourselves as the centre and sole aim of every thing around us. "We

have heard of Hamburg and Pittsburg and this street and the other in our neighbourhood—but such accidents happen only to insignificant vermin around us—they never will or can reach me." If other means have been found unavailing to check such belief and acting upon it, the legislature ought to step in; as it is really too narrow, gentleman or lady going to a hotel in which their bill may amount to 5*l.* or 10*l.*; while they will set the bed-curtains on fire, and cause the loss of property hundredfold that amount, with a few human lives into the bargain. Another ought not to be even an accidental homicide without a judicial procedure, on more ought there to be an accidental arson (!) without it—and if persons were to know, that they will be subjected to, at least, annoying proceedings by setting the bed-curtains or any part of a hotel or other place on fire, they will be more careful than hitherto. Moreover, we think, where the least negligence or carelessness can be proved, such party ought to be subjected to either heavy fine or other punishment—and if malice (on the part of servants or others) can be traced, then, certainly the party should be indicted for either misdemeanour or even felony. The too far extension, and lax organization of fire insurances has had that disadvantage, that fires are only considered as material accidents; but the moment that the public would be made aware that they (in most cases) entail moral evils, the thing would be different.—It is, after all, again our favourite *seven and a half per cent.* Capitalists get their dividend, and the uninsured poor is assigned over to the poorhouse or other "public" charity, which, to say it again, has to pay (in all cases) part of any excessive dividends.

An unpleasant (!) secret has lately come out at Hamburg, which will lead us to another phase of our subject. It has been observed, that a certain merchant had burnt down his premises twice even since the great fire, for which he obtained his premium—and it was first considered a strange coincidence (!) that it was the same gentleman, on whose premises the great fire originated. Similar hints have been thrown out in this country, in one or two instances. What punishment ought to be awarded to a brute, which, for the sake of a mean and pitiful lucre of a few thousand pounds—will distress a whole city—human imagination (or human philanthropy) can scarcely desire. Still, such awful cases exist—Hamburg and Pittsburg have followed each other, at any rate, too close, and we sat boldly and unreservedly: "let us be prepared for, or rather guarded against, similar occurrences—at London, at Birmingham, &c." But this is neither the time nor place to write a book on "public establishments for preventing conflagrations." We may throw out some broad hints, and must leave it to the "discretion and conscience of the people" to carry them out if they are found deserving. London, certainly (and other cities) have a fire brigade, but it lacks proper organization. Any body of men, who are called upon to act promptly, energetically, *concentratedly*, cannot do so without military organization; amongst which the hierarchy of privates, corporals, sergeants—up to the commander (in chief), for every city or district is included. The man who was drunk when he had to use the fire-escape in Dover-street, has been dismissed, and very properly—say, we say, he ought to have been tried for homicide. But do our respected readers know how these fire-escape men are now situated? They have to attend, night after night, to their engine—alone, with the only resort of a little but left to them. Is it to be wondered that they are seized with *caumi*—tired out in fact? and then the resorting to a near public-house, and all the other *et ceteras* are the consequence. The first, therefore, would be to place the fire-escapes at, or very near, the stations of the fire brigade, where the men attending them would have not only company, but be under the eyes of the corporal, sergeant, and the inspecting officers. This leads us to another important item without which no body of men will ever be efficient. This is "the surprising system," as we boldly call it. This system has been resorted to by men like Sultan, Omar, Joseph II., Frederic the Great—albeit in greater concerns than that of fire-escapes. It, however, holds good everywhere. Let the